

We often hear the phrase, “history repeats itself.” I prefer to think that sometimes history attempts to repeat itself but having learned from mistakes in the past, we choose to make different and better decisions the next time around. We are at that crossroad here in the U.S. today. We can and must choose a different road than the one we followed in the past. It is morally imperative that we do so. Speak up and speak out. Together we can ensure the protection of all people here in the U.S. regardless of immigration status. — Karen Richards

“History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again.”

- Maya Angelou



Photo Credit: Declan Haun

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Did you know?

[Operation Wetback](#) is the immigration program President Trump claimed he would follow during the Presidential debates?

Operation Wetback was the second wave of mass deportations of Mexicans. The first occurred during the Great Depression, when people worried that Mexican laborers were taking away jobs.

Before [internment](#), Japanese students were forced to attend segregated schools and visa/citizenship restrictions kept them from marrying U.S. citizens.

While interned, Japanese Americans were forced to prove their loyalty by making uniforms and parachutes to support the U.S. Army.

[The Immigration Act of 1917](#) also prohibited immigration of “undesirables” which included “idiots,” “insane persons,” “alcoholics” and “polygamists” as well as anyone who was illiterate.

On January 27, 2017 President Trump released the Executive Order [Protecting the Nation From Foreign Terrorist Entry Into the United States](#).

On February 3, 2017 U.S. District Judge, James L. Robart issued a Nationwide [Temporary Restraining Order](#) blocking the travel ban put in place by President Trump on January 27, 2017.

In swift reaction to the February 3, 2017 Order, the White House released **revised** Executive Order [Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States](#).

On March 15, 2017, U.S District Judge Derrick Watson issued an [Order](#) Granting Motion for a Temporary Restraining Order blocking the revised Executive Order.



Photo Credit: Nationaldialoguesonimmigration.org

Immigration Policies - Then

“Operation Wetback,” which was put in place under President Eisenhower in May of 1954, was an immigration law enforcement campaign targeting Mexican workers who resided in the U.S. Within just a few months, U.S. Border Patrol deported hundreds of thousands through raids and roadblocks. This operation ran in tandem with the Bracero Program, which made it legal for Mexicans to stay and work as temporary contract laborers to help fill gaps during World War II.

Mexican laborers were deported on ships, with conditions similar to those of slave ships, and were left in the desert just past the border. Across the border in Mexico, left without food, water, money, or resources to make it home, many Mexican laborers suffered heat stroke, and some even died. As the mass deportations continued, Mexican American households also felt the impacts, as the rest of the United States turned to other businesses, isolating even those who were U.S. citizens. The program lasted only a few months, and ended when funding disappeared.

In 1942, in the midst of World War II, President Franklin D. Roosevelt approved the [internment](#) of Japanese Americans. This internment was prompted by the attack on Pearl Harbor and increasing fears of espionage. Racial stereotypes and propaganda created fear that the Japanese were “barbaric” and that despite their U.S. citizenship, they would act as spies for Japan. They were forced to carry identification cards and police searched their homes without warrants. Eventually more than 110,000 people of Japanese ancestry, both citizens and noncitizens, were forced to move out of their homes, leave their businesses and enter internment centers. Despite protests and court cases, in 1944 the Supreme court ruled in [Korematsu v. United States](#), that the internment camps were constitutional, claiming fear of espionage and protection of citizens warranted the camps. Later that year, FDR rescinded the order, and interned citizens were released on the condition they not return to the west coast. During the Carter administration, investigations found that internment was not for fear of espionage, but based on racial stereotypes. Economic reparations were provided to all former internees.

Part of the [Immigration Act of 1917](#), the [Asiatic Barred Zone](#) was a geographic area designated by longitude and latitude that excluded people from eastern Asia and the Pacific Islands from immigrating to the United States. The act was passed under the Wilson Administration, however Wilson himself vetoed it. The act was created due to mounting fear that Asian societies would replace the American identity. It closely followed the [Chinese Exclusion act of 1882](#). Both acts were targeted at Asian immigrants from countries whose immigration had increased with the California gold rush. This act was eliminated in 1952 and replaced by the [Immigration and Nationality Act](#), which is still in effect today.

“Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”

- George Santayana



Photo Credit The Curious Ostrich @ WordPress.com

Immigration Policies Now

The greatest purveyor of violence in the world: My own Government. I can not be silent."

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

Civil and human rights are under attack on an unprecedented number of fronts.

IMMIGRANTS: On January 27, 2017 President Donald Trump signed several executive orders related to immigration including executive order [Protecting The Nation From Foreign Terrorist Entry Into The United States](#) which suspended entry of 'aliens' from seven foreign countries (with predominantly Muslim populations) to the U.S. for 90 days regardless of their immigrant or non-immigrant status. This Executive Order was blocked by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit on February 9, 2017. The full 9th Circuit Court voted to uphold the District Court's order. While the E.O. has since been withdrawn, new regulations released by the Department of Homeland Security direct staff to carry out vigorous enforcement of immigration laws opening the door to mass deportations and altering the immigration landscape from removal as a matter of policy to removal as a matter of practice. According to a New York Times article [New Trump Deportation Rules Allow Far More Expulsions](#), Trump has "directed his administration to enforce the nation's immigration laws more aggressively, unleashing the full force of the federal government to find, arrest and deport those in the country illegally, regardless of whether they have committed serious crimes." This change in policy will tear apart families and disrupt our economy. A second Executive Order was issued by President Trump on February 3, 2017. This order attempted to remedy some of the defects identified by the 9th Circuit. It too was blocked by federal courts in several states.

Under President Obama's administration, the Department of Homeland Security prioritized for removal (deportation) individuals who were undocumented and who had committed certain types of crimes, mainly crimes of violence. The current administration's removal priorities are broad enough to encompass virtually any undocumented individual residing in the U.S. In mid-March, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers arrested three undocumented individuals in Vermont. One was arrested at the courthouse as he appeared to have a DUI charge dismissed and the other two, who had no criminal record, were active spokespersons for Migrant Justice's efforts to protect migrant farmworkers. Mass protests drawing hundreds occurred in Burlington and Montpelier following the arrests and in Boston on the day the individuals' bail requests were heard in federal immigration court. The Vermont Congressional delegation and the Governor are arranging a meeting with ICE officials to discuss the arrests. Two of the individuals have been released on bail pending removal proceedings.

Vermont is fighting back in other ways. A bill originating in the Senate, [S.79](#), entitled an act relating to freedom from compulsory collection of personal information, was signed by Governor Scott on March 28th. It asserts our State's interest in the rich cultural heritage and diversity of our residents. The legislation prohibits the collection or disclosure of personally identifiable information related to protected status, including immigration status, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity if sought for purposes of creating a federal database. The legislation also protects state resources by ensuring that only the Governor, in consultation with the Attorney General, can enter into agreements with the federal government to enforce federal immigration law. This ensures that Vermont law enforcement resources will be spent on state law enforcement priorities, thereby enhancing public safety. Prior to Town Meeting Day, the Office of the Attorney General issued a Guidance to municipalities that wish to take steps locally to protect their residents. A number of Vermont towns passed resolutions to this effect on Town Meeting Day.

On the gender identity front, on February 24, 2017, Governor Scott, Attorney General Donovan, the Human Rights Commission and the Agency of Education issued a [joint press release](#) to reassure Vermonters that the change in policy at the federal level related to bathrooms and locker rooms does not change Vermont law and the legal protections for our LGBTQ students.



Photo Credit: Spider Martin

“First they came for the
socialists, and I did not speak out
because I was not a socialist.

Then they came for the
trade unionists,
and I did not speak out
because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Jews,
and I did not speak out
because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me,
and there was no one left
to speak for me.”

- Pastor Martin Niemoller

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NEWS ARTICLES

[ICE Arrests Green Card Applicants in Lawrence](#)

[News Trump Deportation Rules Allow Far More Expulsions](#)

[Judge Denies Bond for 1 Vt. Immigrant, Approves Other 2](#)

[ICE Detention of Immigrant Rights Activists in VT Case of Political Retaliation](#)

[Hundreds Rally Against Trump Immigration Orders](#)

RESOURCES

[Vermont Human Rights Commission](#)

[Vermont Office of the Attorney General—Civil Rights Division](#)

[ACLU of Vermont](#)

[Migrant Justice](#)

[Vermont Law Help](#)

[Justice for All](#)

[Peace & Justice Center](#)

[Vermont Partnership for Fairness and Diversity](#)

[South Royalton Legal Clinic](#)

[Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program](#)